

with out slowing down or acknowledging the children. Through her bravery and quick thinking, Nicole saved this young boy from being hit by that car.

Raul Valdez, a AAA school safety patroller at West Gate Elementary in Manassas, VA, showed great courage when he saved a young girl who ran out in front of an oncoming van on April 13, 2007. Following an adult guard's "hold back" instruction, Raul put his arms up to prevent students from crossing the busy area of the school drive where buses and daycare vans collect children. When a young girl attempted to run across the drive, Raul reached for her shoulder and swiftly pulled her out of the way of an approaching daycare van. Thanks to Raul's attentiveness and his speedy reaction time, that young girl was saved from harm.

Clarissa Sourada is a safety patroller at Union Mill Elementary in Clifton, VA. On a morning in February 2007, Clarissa was holding two children at the edge of a residential driveway near her post, waiting for the clear to cross, when she noticed a vehicle backing towards them. She alerted the children to the danger and called for them to move out of the way. When one child did not heed her warning, Clarissa pushed the child from the driveway to the sidewalk, safely out of the path of the car. That child's life was saved thanks to Clarissa's quick thinking and attentive supervision.

As these three exceptional young people have demonstrated, the participants in the AAA School Safety Patrol Program serve an important role in ensuring that our young people get to school safely. This program has helped save countless lives, and I thank the AAA and the program volunteers for making it all possible. I know I speak for every Member of the Senate in expressing our gratitude for their valuable work in our communities.

ONE YEAR AFTER VIRGINIA TECH

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, April 16 marked 1 year since the deadliest shooting rampage in our Nation's history, a tragedy that took the lives of 32 Virginia Tech students and faculty members and wounded 17 more. April 16 was a day that forever changed the lives of many and we struggle to make sense of this senseless tragedy.

In almost 32 States, and on at least 32 college campuses, survivors and family members of those killed or injured in that shooting recently joined students, parents, and concerned citizens to remember the lives lost on April 16, 2007. During remembrance events across the country, hundreds laid silently on the ground in groups of 32 to honor the 32 innocent victims murdered at Virginia Tech. In my home State of Michigan, people gathered in Detroit and Kalamazoo to ring bells, read names, and recite prayers, all to remember the victims of this horrible tragedy.

These commemorations also sought to remember the families and loved ones of the more than approximately 100,000 people who are killed or injured by a firearm every year in America. Hundreds joined in expressing their frustrations at the glaring gaps in our Nation's gun laws. In August 2007, a panel of experts, commissioned by Virginia Gov. Tim Kaine, issued a report based upon their independent review of the tragedy at Virginia Tech. Among other things, the report pointed to weak enforcement of and gaps in regulations regarding the purchase of guns, as well as holes in State and Federal laws. It also emphasized the critical need for improved background checks and the danger firearms can present on college campuses.

Despite these calls from experts and outcries from the American people, the Congress has yet to act to make it harder for dangerous people to obtain dangerous weapons. By strengthening our background check system, closing the gun show loophole, and renewing the assault weapons ban we could help put an end to the type of tragedies such as the one that occurred at Virginia Tech.

RECOGNITION OF THE SERVICE OF FORMER SENATOR WALTER "FRITZ" MONDALE

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a statement made by Senator LEAHY at the University of Minnesota on April 7, 2008.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

Mr. LEAHY. Thank you Senator Klobuchar. And what a joy it still is to say those two words together. Minnesota's new senator already is bringing even more distinction to the seat that Hubert Humphrey held. She is another star who was mentored by Fritz Mondale, and she is upholding that grand DFL tradition.

When I was asked if I could be here with you, I was more than glad to clear my calendar to do it. It is a special honor and a great pleasure to be here with you in recognition of the service, the historical significance, and the 80th anniversary year of a friend, a former colleague, and an American statesman.

In this room we know him as "Fritz." Others call him Walter. When he was a halfback in high school, they called him "Crazylegs Mondale" for some reason. He has also gone by Mr. Attorney General, Senator, Mr. Vice President, Mr. Ambassador, and Dad. I think I like Crazylegs best. I can't wait to ask him about how that happened.

The history of the era of his public service has not yet taken full form for the ages, but even now Fritz Mondale looms large as a model and as a catalyst, in his roles in the Senate and as Vice President.

I have been asked to focus particularly on his time in the Senate.

Walter Mondale is sometimes described as the paradigm figure of the transition between two eras—the FDR Coalition up to the War in Vietnam, and the social ferment that came after the war. And perhaps this is so. But to me, who Fritz Mondale is, and what he stands for, are just as important as when

he stood there. Deep echoes resonate throughout his service of the first principles of our Republic. The issues he led on then are as fresh as today's news, and as enduring as our founding documents.

Issues like the concentration and abuse of power. Or social and economic justice and the consolidation of wealth in the pockets and portfolios of just a few. Or the role of government in protecting the little guy when powerful market forces run roughshod. Or the tension between freedom and security. Or the challenge of achieving energy security. Or the very roles of both the Senate and the Office of the Vice President in the American system. Even the question of whether a woman ever could credibly assume the highest office in the land. Trace any of these issues back in time, and you will find Fritz Mondale at earlier decision points. For example, just imagine how loose from our moorings we might be right now without the guideposts of the FISA law, which resulted from the investigation that he, Frank Church and others launched into earlier abuses of the power of government to snoop into Americans' lives.

Here is something to which we all can attest. Fritz Mondale is a good man whose decency elevated every institution in which he served. Who he is has everything to do with what he achieved.

Clarence once said that his brother's politics were, as he put it, "an extension of our father's preaching," and I can see that. Their father, the farmer-turned-minister, felt and saw the ravages of the Great Depression on the farms and the communities of the heartland. And when Fritz entered politics, he did it for the right reasons, to make life better for the people.

In the Senate we mostly chalked Fritz's personality up to clean air, clean living and Norwegian genes. He was and is well liked on both sides of the aisle. Fritz's dad taught him that your integrity is everything, and the lesson stuck. He kept his word and everyone trusted him. He was always well prepared. And he surrounded himself with good and competent people. He had one of the best staffs on the Hill, and it's a treat to see some of those staffers sprinkled around the room today.

I've known Fritz a long while, but you still pick up some new perspectives in preparing for an occasion like this. I knew he was avid about hunting and fishing in the North Woods, but I hadn't known his reputation for being such a good "bull cook."

I looked it up. A bull cook is the fellow stuck with doing the chores around camp, cutting fuel, cleaning up and cooking. But when he rings the bell in the morning, everyone has to get up. I think that after being in a place like the Senate where no one is able to give orders that stick, Fritz likes that sense of real power when he rings that bell.

One side of Fritz that the public did not see as readily as we did in the Senate was his sense of humor—one of the best I have ever known. In many a tense moment, his sense of humor often defused the tension and restored the spirit of comity that is so crucial in getting things done in the Senate.

I wish the American people had seen more of that side of Fritz Mondale. Mike Berman told Fritz's biographer Finlay Lewis that the staff was always urging Fritz to loosen up in public. Mike said, "I can't count the number of lit cigars I have stuffed in my pocket over the years."

He loved the Senate, and the Senate loved him back. He once said that he "found his sweet spot" in the Senate. He was a quick learner and craved learning new things. He said the Senate "was like mainlining human nature." And it's true. You pick up any day's Congressional Record, and it's like America's newspaper. Whatever is happening in